



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**Family  
Independence  
Agency**

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DOUGLAS E. HOWARD, Director

# News Release

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## Monroe County Woman Honored by FIA

MONROE— Michigan Family Independence Agency (FIA) deputy director, Mark Jasonowicz today, presented the agency's October Achiever of the Month award to Krystina Wallace of Luna Pier at the Monroe County Intermediate School District. Jasonowicz presided over a ceremony attended by the Monroe County FIA staff, their Work First partner, Southeast Michigan Community Alliance, Monroe County officials and several of Ms. Wallace's family and friends. Together, they celebrated her successful transition from welfare to work.

The Achiever of the Month Award was established in October 1993 to recognize persons making outstanding progress toward self-sufficiency under Michigan's comprehensive welfare reform initiative *To Strengthen Michigan's Families*.

This month's award acknowledges the achievements of Krystina Wallace, a former public assistance recipient who has demonstrated remarkable progress toward economic independence and self-improvement, despite significant barriers to her success.

(more)



JOHN ENGLER, Governor

In 1997, this single mother moved from Wakefield, Michigan to Monroe County to start a new life. Krystina had grown up in the community and liked the area. However, her primary reason for relocating was to allow her children to be closer to their grandparents, who also lived in Monroe County.

Initially, the move did not appear to be a successful step for Krystina's family. At that time, she was pregnant with her second child, unemployed and needed help with food and health care. In September 1997, despite reservations, she applied to the Monroe County FIA for assistance. Through the FIA she received Family Independence Program benefits (FIP), food stamps and Medicaid to help make ends meet.

Over the years Krystina had worked at several jobs and been on and off of public assistance. Her lack of job skills made it extremely difficult for her to find employment that paid enough to meet her family's needs.

Through the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance, Krystina was enrolled in a licensed practical nursing program at the Toledo School of Practical Nursing in Toledo, Ohio. Work First also provided her with uniforms and assisted in paying for her State Boards. In addition, the FIA helped with child day care and later, when the family needed to relocate to find housing, they assisted Krystina by providing State Emergency Relief.

In May 2001, Krystina graduated from the licensed practical nursing program and took her test for LPN certification on October 24. Currently, she works part-time at the Tender Care Nursing Home in Monroe. Upon receiving her LPN certification, she will become a full-time employee. Krystina's cash assistance case closed on June 30, 2001 due to earnings. The family receives transitional Medicaid, which can last up to one year after departure from FIP.

Kristina Wallace was selected to receive the Achiever of the Month award because of her determination to improve life for family and her motivation to become independent of the welfare system.

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